

HOMESCHOOLING THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

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Like many of you, my homeschooling journey started because my husband and I were unhappy with the education our daughter was receiving. The summer after her kindergarten year we decided to pursue homeschooling. I didn't really know what I was getting into and my few thoughts about homeschoolers were really about the tiny minority and not the majority. One thing I thought for sure was that this homeschooling idea would be a temporary fix until something better came to us. Homeschooling through high school was laughable, confusing, and definitely not what I ever thought I would be doing.

God has a funny way of knowing exactly what we need long before we do and here I am, nine short years later teaching and guiding my oldest through high school. While even typing that out makes me feel terribly sad and incredibly old, this season with her will be one of my favorites to treasure forever.

As a family, we have experienced more than I can imagine because we have chosen to homeschool our children. Over the years I have been pulled out of my comfort zone to seek more community through a homeschool co-op and a couple of more social and activity-based groups I have founded and organized. Homeschooling has forced me to educate myself and never stop learning. I have spoken with hundreds of families and without question there is almost always a different vibe when the topic of high school comes up.

As parents we work up to these moments of pivotal transition for our children with endless training, encouragement, and prayer. Sneaky lies from the enemy still enter my thoughts telling me I am undeniably unqualified to be teaching high school and that I'm ruining my daughter's life and that it would be so much easier to just send her to school.

I do not have a teaching degree, but I know how to reach and teach my daughter better than any other qualified teacher would. It takes years of practice and genuine interest to learn my daughter's quirks, strengths and weaknesses. Years that no one else could or would dedicate to learning and adjusting for her success - success no one else desires more than me.







I am not ruining my children's lives by teaching them at home. I am educating them in what feels and truly is the most natural way. I'm sure you would agree that the benefits of homeschooling are incomparable to that of traditional school.

Sending my children to school would be so much easier. That's not a lie. We were probably all taught as children to not take the easy way out. We are also not called to live an easy life. Homeschooling is not the easy road to take. It may be natural for us and it's most likely something we feel called to do, but easy isn't a word I usually use to describe homeschooling. And I absolutely would not describe parenting teens as easy. We have been given these children to love, nurture, and teach. Even if you put your teen in traditional school you are held accountable for those responsibilities. Homeschooling them allows you more time and interaction to fulfill those responsibilities and build life-long relationships. Even though parenting and homeschooling through the teen years isn't easy it is worth it and worthy of our time.

While the thought of homeschooling high school can be intimidating and overwhelming, I encourage you that it can be done and it can also become one of your most treasured seasons in life.

TIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL HOMESCHOOLING

Wondering where to start on your high school homeschool journey? It is a bit different and more “serious” so below are my first step pointers and some things to ponder.

ONE

Depending on your state you may need to have an umbrella school or a designated organization to file through in order for your child to receive her diploma. I am sure if you live in a state with more restrictive homeschooling laws you are accustomed to this process already. If you live in Texas or a more “homeschool friendly” state then you, the parent, simply issue the diploma upon meeting the graduation requirements. Yes, it is that simple!

TWO

Find out what the high school graduating requirements are for your state. Is there four years of foreign languages required or three? Do all of the years need to be of the same language? How many semesters of physical education are required? I found these requirements easily through internet searches. I typed up a simple spreadsheet so I can easily switch up when and how those requirements have been or will be met. I love having that freedom!



THREE

Ask questions! Seek out counsel from other moms who have homeschooled through high school or who are currently in that season. Sharing ideas and getting feedback are some things I think most of us appreciate. One of my favorite resources is a Facebook group called “It’s Not That Hard to Homeschool High School”.

FOUR

Jump in and share your excitement with your teen! While there are requirements and things that should be learned through these years there are countless educational benefits to spending this time at home:

--There will be many semesters of electives to take. Texas requires nine semesters. Let your teen make a list of interests they would like to delve into . . . culinary arts, photography, welding, gardening, event planning, computer coding, graphic design, etc. Add lessons that you think are important to learn before they leave the nest such as budgeting, home management (i.e. laundry, cooking, simple repairs), auto shop, etc.

--You and your teen have the options to vary even the required courses and tailor them toward personal interests and strengths. My daughter is not planning to major in chemistry and has no desire to do anything in the medical field. She needs chemistry this coming year and we are using a curriculum that is heavy in reading about chemistry and chemists while doing practical experiments that visually show chemistry in action. She won’t be bogged down with dozens of hours doing chemical equations because she will not be using them in the future.

--Your teen will have much more time to explore her ideas for future plans. Maybe your daughter is like mine and changes her mind quite often about her future career. We are working on what I refer to as the elimination plan. Taking a psychology course (hello, elective semester) can quickly spark a fire or eliminate the question about whether she would enjoy being a therapist. Maybe your son has always known he wanted to be a veterinarian. He can take courses that are more geared toward that career path including business courses and more in-depth animal biology.

We all know the benefits to homeschooling our children and those benefits continue and peak through high school. I assure you that if you have a heart for homeschooling you can most definitely homeschool and mentor your teen through the high school years. Two things I know for sure are that the years with my children are short and I will never regret the time and efforts I put into this crazy journey I have chosen.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leila is a list maker, creative mess initiator, and lives in a somewhat organized chaos with her husband and four kids that she homeschools. She loves learning and sharing her passion for being a wife and mother.

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